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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Stott	:	DECISION
Application No. 10/030,137	:	
Filing Date: 28 January, 2002	:	
Attorney Docket No.: P67518USO	:	

This is a revised decision on the petition filed on 25 May, 2006, requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

For the reasons set forth below, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED**.

NOTES:

- (1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181."

(If Petitioner is unable to present even a satisfactory showing to support a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a), and Petitioner's only alternative will be to file a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).)

- (2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.¹

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the drawings requirement contained in the Notice of Allowance and Fees Due and Notice of Allowability mailed on 1 December, 2005, with reply due under a non-extendable deadline on or before 1 March, 2006;
- the application went abandoned after midnight 1 March, 2006;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 11 May, 2006;
- on 25 May, 2006, Petitioner filed a the instant petition with the allegation that he had been in contact with the Examiner and that Petitioner's corrected drawings had been filed months earlier on 25 January, 2006.

Such an allegation is not responsive to the issue as to the 1 December, 2005, drawings requirement.

An Office action issued, and by statute (35 U.S.C.), rule/regulation (37 C.F.R.) and practice (Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP)), Petitioner is bound to reply timely and properly.

Moreover, the allegation as to a conversation with the Examiner is of no merit—Petitioner is reminded of the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.2²

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition

¹ For more than a century, punctuality and due diligence, equally with good faith, have been deemed essential requisites to the success of those who seek to obtain the special privileges of the patent law, and they are demanded in the interest of the public and for the protection of rival inventors. See: Porter v. Louden, 7 App.D.C. 64 (C.A.D.C. 1895), citing Wollensak v. Sargent, 151 U.S. 221, 228, 38 L. Ed. 137, 14 S. Ct. 291 (1894). An invention benefits no one unless it is made public, and the rule of diligence should be so applied as to encourage reasonable promptness in conferring this benefit upon the public. Automatic Electric Co. v. Dyson, 52 App. D.C. 82; 281 F. 586 (C.A.D.C. 1922). Generally, 35 U.S.C. §6; 37 C.F.R. §§1.181, 182, 183.

² The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:
§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and those registered to practice *and* all others who make representations before the Office are reminded to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.³

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the

³ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

Specifically, the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §10.18 provide:

§ 10.18 Signature and certificate for correspondence filed in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(a) For all documents filed in the Office in patent, trademark, and other non-patent matters, except for correspondence that is required to be signed by the applicant or party, each piece of correspondence filed by a practitioner in the Patent and Trademark Office must bear a signature by such practitioner complying with the provisions of §1.4(d), §1.4(e), or § 2.193(c)(1) of this chapter.

(b) By presenting to the Office (whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating) any paper, the party presenting such paper, whether a practitioner or non-practitioner, is certifying that—

(1) All statements made therein of the party's own knowledge are true, all statements made therein on information and belief are believed to be true, and all statements made therein are made with the knowledge that whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Patent and Trademark Office, knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be subject to the penalties set forth under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that violations of this paragraph may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom; and

(2) To the best of the party's knowledge, information and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances, that —

(i) The paper is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass someone or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of prosecution before the Office;

(ii) The claims and other legal contentions therein are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law or the establishment of new law;

(iii) The allegations and other factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, are likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and

(iv) The denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence, or if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on a lack of information or belief.

(c) Violations of paragraph (b)(1) of this section by a practitioner or non-practitioner may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom. Violations of any of paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section are, after notice and reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to such sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, which may include, but are not limited to, any combination of —

(1) Holding certain facts to have been established;

(2) Returning papers;

(3) Precluding a party from filing a paper, or presenting or contesting an issue;

(4) Imposing a monetary sanction;

(5) Requiring a terminal disclaimer for the period of the delay; or

(6) Terminating the proceedings in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(d) Any practitioner violating the provisions of this section may also be subject to disciplinary action. See § 10.23(c)(15).

[Added 50 FR 5175, Feb. 6, 1985, effective Mar. 8, 1985; para. (a) revised, 58 FR 54494, Oct. 22, 1993, effective Nov. 22, 1993; paras. (a) & (b) revised, paras. (c) & (d) added, 62 FR 53131, Oct. 10, 1997, effective Dec. 1, 1997; para. (a) revised, 69 FR 56481, Sept. 21, 2004, effective Oct. 21, 2004]

satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).⁴

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁵

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁶ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁷ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁸ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁹))

Allegations as to the Request to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal of a holding of abandonment.¹⁰

⁴ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁵ Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

⁶ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁷ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁸ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁹ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

¹⁰ See: Delgar v. Schulyer, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).

The commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) provides:

* * *

B. Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on Evidence That a Reply Was Timely Mailed or Filed

37 C.F.R. §1.10(c) through §1.10(e) and §1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as “Express Mail.” A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in “Express Mail” must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.10(c), (d), * (e), or (g) (see MPEP § 513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the “Express Mail” procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the “Express Mail” date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP § 503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. §1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) and MPEP § 512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the

correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8).

37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP § 512.

* * *

Thus, Petitioner appears not to have satisfied the showing requirements described above.

CONCLUSION

Because Petitioner has not satisfied the burdens set forth in Delgar v. Schulyer, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 hereby is **dismissed**.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

It appears that, because Petitioner failed to fail of record a response to the 1 December, 2005, drawings requirement, Petitioner's only alternative to irretrievable abandonment may be petition alleging unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).¹¹

Petitioner may wish to file such a petition to the Commissioner requesting revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay. (See: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/documents/0700_711_03_c.htm#sect711.03c)

¹¹ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.183 sets forth that waiver of the rules is "subject to such other requirements as may be imposed."

A petition to revive on the grounds of unintentional delay must be filed promptly and such petition must be accompanied by the reply (the amendment), the petition fee, and a statement that "the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition was unintentional." (The statement is in the form available online.)

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:¹²

By mail: Commissioner for Patents¹³
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: IFW Formal Filings
(571) 273-8300
ATTN.: Office of Petitions

By hand: Mail Stop: Petition
Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

¹² On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number changed to (571) 273-8300. The old FAX number no longer is in service and (571) 273-8300 will be the only facsimile number recognized for centralized delivery. (For further information, see: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/cfax062005.pdf>.)

¹³ To determine the appropriate addresses for other subject-specific correspondence, refer to the USPTO Web site at www.uspto.gov.